

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT LOUIS 0584

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PORS PINS EAGR MP BE UR CU LY XO EG FR XA SE MA
SUBJECT: MAURITIUS WEEKLY REVIEW - MAY 19, 1978 - SUMMARY

REF: PORT LOUIS 0564 (DTG 120730Z MAY 78)
PORT LOUIS A-41, MAY 19, 1978

1. THE JUDICIAL INQUIRY INTO THE MAURICIEN FIRE CONTINUED TO DOMINATE THE NEWS THIS WEEK. GAETAN DUVAL, APPEARING AS THE LAWYER FOR ACCUSED MEMBERS OF THE STATE SECURITY SERVICE (SSS), CROSS-EXAMINED AT LENGTH HIS POLITICAL ENEMY, PAUL BERENGER, LEADER OF THE MAURITIAN MILITANT MOVEMENT (MMM), BUT LITTLE CONCRETE RESULTED FROM THEIR VERBAL SPARRING. MUCH MORE SPECTACULAR WAS THE SUDDEN, UNANNOUNCED APPEARANCE IN COURT OF SHEIK HOSSEN, THE SSS'S ACCUSER, WHO HAS BEEN SOUGHT BY POLICE FOR WEEKS. HOSSEN WAS SURROUNDED BY MMM LAWYERS, DEPUTIES AND BODYGUARDS. HIS LAWYER LED
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HIM THROUGH A LONG RECITAL OF HIS CHARGES AGAINST THE SSS, WHICH CONTAINED LITTLE NEW. IN CROSS-EXAMINATION, GOVERNMENT LAWYER ROBERT AHNEE, APPARENTLY REFERRING TO A FILE OBTAINED FROM INTERPOL, ASKED HOSSEN IF HE HAD COMMITTED VARIOUS THEFTS IN BELGIUM AND IF HE HAD BEEN SENTENCED FOR ONE OF THESE. HOSSEN DENIED THESE CHARGES, BUT HE DID ADMIT TO PASSING BAD CHECKS IN MAURITIUS, TO RUNNING UP AN ENORMOUS

BILL FOR PERSONAL PHONE CALLS TO BELGIUM AT THE CERNEEN
NEWSPAPER, AND TO OFFERING, IN A LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER,
TO LEAD A CRUSADE AGAINST THE MMM.

2. THE MMM OFFERED FIVE AMENDMENTS TO THE GOVERNMENT'S
PROGRAM IN THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE AT THE ASSEMBLY
SESSION THIS WEEK, BUT ALL FIVE WERE DEFEATED IN MOSTLY
STRAIGHT PARTY-LINE VOTES. THERE WERE NO NEW DEVELOPMENTS
IN THE MATTER OF THE MMM DEPUTY, UTEEM, WHO LAST WEEK WAS
DETAINED BY POLICE LEAVING THE LIBYAN EMBASSY WITH A LARGE
PARCEL OF CASH. PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM HAS APPARENTLY
DECIDED TO LET THE MATTER SIMMER, AND HAS TAKEN NO ACTION
AGAINST THE DEPUTY NOR AGAINST THE LIBYANS.

3. THE PRIME MINISTER IS HAVING "GALL BLADDER TROUBLE"
AND HAS HAD TO CURTAIL HIS ACTIVITIES. HE WILL CONSULT
DOCTORS IN LONDON FOLLOWING HIS ATTENDACE AT THE FRANCO-
AFRICAN SUMMIT IN PARIS NEXT WEEK. BERENGER AND DE L'ESTRAC
ARE ATTENDING THE CONFERENCE OF "PROGRESSIVES" OF THE OAU
IN ANTANANARIVO WITH THE STATUS OF OBSERVERS. A SOVIET
PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION COMPLETED A THREE-DAY, VERY LOW-KEY
VISIT ON MAY 16. IT WAS THE SAME GROUP THAT HAD VISITED
ZAMBIA.

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